(U) Raul Responds

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(U) Ooooh, weeeeee!!! Dog my cats and corn my pone! My last article obviously hit a few nerves. So I'll provide a little feedback to the feedback .

(U) Even as old and ancient as Old Raul is, he can still learn a few things. First, in all future articles I'll be absolutely sure to specify things so as not to allow folks to read into what my point is. Also, I have to be careful in my choice of words.

(U) In my last article I used the word "considered" meaning a well thought out response by both the technical and managerial sides of the house to the PDF processing problem. I did not simply mean whether anyone, while eating a hamburger or chewing a stick of gum, had happened to consider any of the issues I mentioned in the article. Obviously many folks, including myself, had. Whether anyone had "considered" the issue(s) at all was not my point. Mea culpa. Having said that, here we go.

(U) Before we start skinning the chipmunks, let me spell out a few of the requirements one, or at least Raul, would surely think should have gone into a "considered" solution. Here they are:

1. There are two areas to be addressed: processing for selection and filtering and processing for display. If we can come up with one solution adequate for both, fine. If not, then we'll have to have multiple solutions.
2. In both cases above, the processes have to be capable of handling damaged data. No exception here.
3. Whatever the solution is, it has to be readily available to the analyst (i.e. available via the standard processing & display tools and compatible with the operating system the analyst uses). If I have to call ten people, mail or ftp the thing and then wait days, weeks or months for a response, and then perhaps go to a special computer to view the output, well, that's just not going to cut it. You'd be amazed at how many people around here think that is a perfectly reasonable way of doing business.
4. Since we are the National Security Agency, the process has to be able to handle foreign language material and if used for selection and filtering, must output all text and images in standard formats that are compatible with standard processing and display tools.
5. The appropriate resources have to be made available to ensure success. Success doesn't mean perfection. Let's say it's that famous 80% solution. 80% though does not mean it does 4 of 5 things and doesn't do the 5th at all.

(U/FOUO) Now, having said all that, let me note that not one alternative sent as feedback fit the bill. Either the solution couldn't handle damaged data or foreign text or wasn't available to the masses or was no better and perhaps worse than just trying to slog along with Adobe Acrobat Reader 4. Bin Laden is still safe and we, to the best of my knowledge, still have no reasonable solution to the PDF problem. But in case I'm wrong, and you have a working solution that meets the requirements above, please let me know.

Happy New Year!